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C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 000778

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP AND DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/26/2013

TAGS: PHUM BM NLD

SUBJECT: EMBASSY OFFICERS VISIT RESIDENCES OF DETAINED
SENIOR NLD OFFICIALS

REF: A. RANGOON 724

1B. RANGOON 636

1C. RANGOON 639

1D. RANGOON 768

Classified By: COM CARMEN M. MARTINEZ. REASON: 1.5(B)

11. (C) Summary: Pol/Econ chief, accompanied by a senior Burmese FSN, went to the residences of eight of the ten CEC members on June 26. We found the security at the houses of the Central Committee members lax in contrast to 2000, when the GOB posted military intelligence agents (MI) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) officers at the houses of the CEC members. Any easing may have been a result of the GOB not believing that we would continue pressing to see the detainees in the face of continuing stonewalling by the government. Continued visits by U.S. Embassy officials serve to keep not only the GOB, but also the democratic opposition, on notice that we will continue to protest what is happening here. End Summary.

12. (C) As part of post's continuing efforts to gain access to members of the Central Executive Committee (CEC) of the National League for Democracy (NLD), Pol/Econ chief, accompanied by a senior Burmese FSN, went to the residences of eight of the ten CEC members on June 26. The GOB continues to insist publicly they are not under arrest. Our information, gleaned from loose-lipped guards at the gates, as well as from conversations with members of the detainees' families, indicates otherwise. In reality, the detainees are under house arrest under the provisions of Section 10 (b) of a 1975 law "restraining" them for up to year (Ref A - in practice they can be held as long as the GOB sees fit).

13. (C) We found the security at the houses of the Central Committee members lax in contrast to 2000, when the GOB posted military intelligence agents (MI) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) officers at the houses of the CEC members. The current security is also less than was in place in the first few days after the May 30 attack on ASSK and her followers in Depeyin, when MI and MOFA were very much in evidence when we were barred from entering the houses of detained CEC members (Ref B). Currently, those same houses are being watched by low-level local government officials and USDA members.

14. (C) We did not get a chance to talk to the detained NLD leaders, although several looked out from the windows of their houses. We did talk to members of the households of several of the detainees and were told that family members are being allowed to go in and out of the residences. From the information we gathered from the relatives, it seems the detainees are in relatively good health and are allowed visits from physicians. To judge from the reactions of the family members, these latest visits were welcome, just as before (Ref C). We will continue these visits as part of our ongoing efforts (Ref D) to remind the GOB and the democratic opposition, in a public way, that the USG's support for the NLD is still strong.

15. (C) We took this opportunity to deliver invitations to the CEC members for post's upcoming Independence Day reception, and we were able to leave the invitations with members of the household in all but one case. Post was amused to see the French press release announcing that they have invited Aung San Suu Kyi and the other detained NLD leaders to their Bastille Day ceremony on July 14. In fact, the French have passed their Bastille Day invitations to the CEC and ASSK to us for delivery and we will try to deliver them next week. Hopefully, the French will come along.

16. (C) Comment: The apparent slight easing of security and permitting family members access to the detained CEC members should not be taken as a sign that detainees will be released any time soon. Any easing may have been a result of the GOB not believing that we would continue pressing to see the detainees in the face of continuing stonewalling by the government. However, continued visits by U.S. Embassy officials serve to keep not only the GOB, but also the democratic opposition, on notice that we will continue to protest what is happening here. End Comment.
Martinez